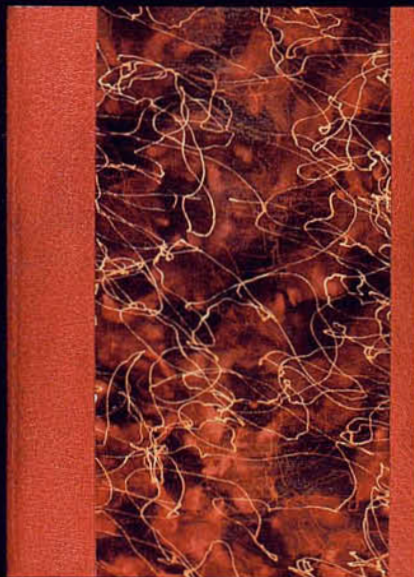
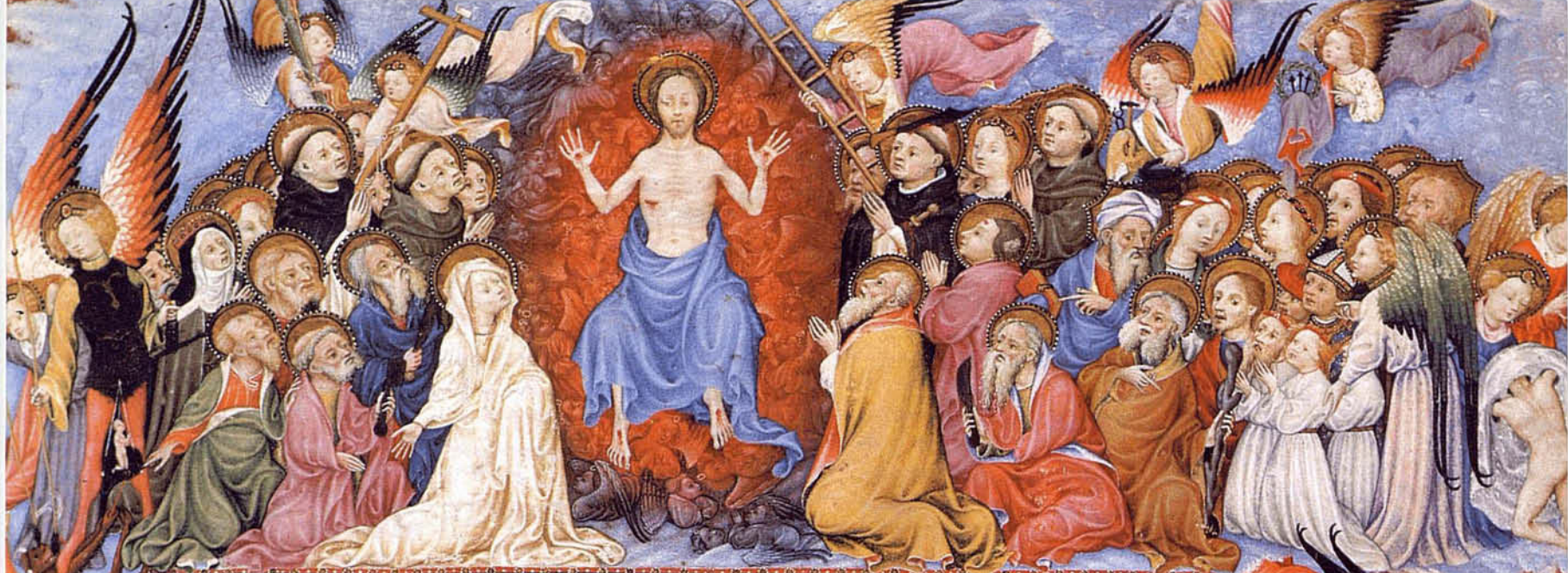


CATALAN PUBLISHING ACTIVITY BEGAN MANY YEARS AGO. ANSCARI MUNDÓ, DIRECTOR OF THE "BIBLIOTECA DE CATALUNYA", REMINDS US IN HIS ARTICLE THAT THERE IS EVIDENCE DATING BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF THE 5TH CENTURY. PUBLISHING IN THE CATALAN LANGUAGE BEGAN LATER, BUT CATALAN LITERATURE CONTAINS CLASSICS COMPARABLE TO THOSE OF OTHER, NEIGHBOURING ROMANCE LITERATURES: CASTILIAN, FRENCH AND ITALIAN. THE CATALAN CLASSICS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED REPEATEDLY FROM THE MIDDLE AGES DOWN TO OUR OWN TIME. AT PRESENT, CATALAN-LANGUAGE EDITIONS, WHETHER ORIGINAL WORKS OR TRANSLATIONS, MAKE ALL FIELDS OF KNOWLEDGE ACCESSIBLE TO US, FICTION AND NON-FICTION, ART AND TECHNOLOGY, BOOKS ON SCIENCE AND SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE, CLASSICS AND NEW CREATIVE WRITING.







**Omnia .i. aduentus dñi offm**

**A**d te leuavi aia; mea; dñs  
nis in te confido nō eru-  
lesca; neq; irascat me inimi-  
ci mei et ei uniuersi qui te expec-  
tant nō deficietur. **V**ias tu-

as dñe demonstra m. **p** Et se-

mitas tuas edoce me. **G**loria

**G**loria q; non dicatur

**G**loria mercedis deo. **O**ro

**E**xalta dñe potetia tu-

am et ueni. ut ab in-

imicis pccator nror p-

culis. te meamur p teger-

te eripi. te libante salua-

ri. **Q**ui. **lc ad romanos.**

**R**es. Saetes q; hora e-

ia nos de sopno sur-

gere. Nunc. at ppor e nra sa-

lus. q; cu credidimus. Hor-

pcessit dies. at appiquauit

Abiciamus g opa tenebrar-

et iduamur arma lucis sic-

ut i die honeste ambulem.

Nō i comessacōib; et ebr-

etatib; Nō in cubilib; et

impudicijs. Nō i cōtēcio-

ne. z emulacione. Set in

diuini. dñi nri ih; xpi.

**R** Uniuersi q; te expectat nō cō-

ficietur dñe. **V**ias tuas dñe

notas fac m z semitas tuas edo-





# CATALAN PUBLISHING: AN UPWARD TREND



IN AN EXTREMELY FAST TEN-YEAR PROCESS OF NORMALIZATION, CATALAN PUBLISHING HAS GAINED AN EQUAL FOOTING WITH THOSE EUROPEAN LANGUAGES OF SIMILAR HUMAN POTENTIAL. THE OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE IS HOPEFUL, ESPECIALLY IF WE CONSIDER CATALAN'S INCREASING PENETRATION OF THE EUROPEAN CIRCUITS OF WRITTEN CULTURE.

JOSEP M. PUIGJANER AUTHOR AND PUBLISHER

**T**his article is intended to provide an overall view of editorial production in the Catalan language. From the very start, though, it must be realised that this includes the publication of books throughout the area of implantation of the Catalan language, which easily surpasses the strict limits of Catalonia, extending into all the countries of Catalan language and culture, in which this language lives and develops. The País Valencià, the Balearics, the Roussillon (in the south of France), and Andorra are the natural territorial areas of Catalan, though in each area the same language takes different denominations (valencià, mallorquí, menorquí, rossellonès, etc.). It should also be pointed out that the history of Catalan books is not only

linked to advances in the educational and cultural level of the people for whom it is a sign of identity—as happens with other languages—but also to the social and political ups and downs of a human society which has had to fight to defend that identity, those specific characteristics which make up its distinguishing features.

At the same time, if we are to interpret the present situation of Catalan editorial production correctly, it is useful to go back—however briefly—a century in time. As a result of the recovery made by Catalan—a millenary language of culture—in the second half of the last century, and spurred on by the phenomenon of the *Renaixença* in all the Catalan-speaking lands, 80 titles were published in 1874. The figures researchers

have established for 1876 and 1888 are of 90 and 150 titles, respectively.

In 1906, the year of the 1st International Congress of the Catalan Language, a similar number were published. The dynamic spirit arising in the Principality of Catalonia as a result of the first attempt at self-government, the *Mancomunitat de Catalunya*, acted as a boost to cultural development, which was clearly visible in the world of book and magazine publishing of all kinds. In 1923, the publication figure reached 400 titles. Although under the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera the circumstances were not the most favourable, the figure reached 500. The upward trend continued over the following years, and in 1927 there were 650 titles published; six years later, in



1933, after Catalonia had achieved considerable political autonomy, editorial production was about the 750 title mark. The publishing peak, before the defeat of the Civil War, was in 1936, when 865 titles were published.

The victory of Fascism in the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) led to an implacable repression directed against Catalonia's signs of identity and especially against her language itself. Publishing was mercilessly wiped out. Between 1939 and 1947, fifty clandestine titles are recorded, at the very most, to which must be added the editions produced in the diaspora (Mexico, Chile, etc.) by exiled Catalan republicans. The mitigation of the rigour of the new regime, following its consolidation in the early years, took the form of a certain tolerance in the face of the drive and the pressures of Catalan society. After 1962 production started to increase steadily, and the 270 titles published that year were increased to 611 in 1975.

All the start of this account, I spoke of the close relationship between Catalan publishing and the social and political background of those groups for whom Catalan is the natural vehicle of expression. Thus the end of the totalitarian regime, following the death of Franco in 1975, and the transition to democracy were to have a decisive effect in the world of book production. From that date on, the Catalan language started on a period of recuperation in all fields. There was a spectacular increase in the number of books published: from 791 titles in 1976 to 4,200 titles in 1988. And if we look at the way the proportion of books in Catalan has progressed in comparison with the total published over the whole of the Spanish state, we can see that in the period 1976-1988 the figure went from 3 % to 10.9 %.

What we find, then, is a steady increase in the number of titles. The reasons for this are to be found in the consolidation of teaching in the Catalan language and of the Catalan language in teaching, and in the progressive adoption of Catalan as the main vehicle of communication and culture on the part of broader and broader sections of the adult population.

The question which emerges spontaneously is whether this so-far unstoppable rise in the number of titles produced each year is about to reach a ceiling. There is every reason to suppose, as some experts predict, that the



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market's saturation point is not far away. It appears that, unless things change unexpectedly, and in view of the level of demand of a market with the

present reading habits, the publishing ceiling cannot be placed much above 4,500 or 5,000 titles a year.

The other aspect to be born in mind is the number of copies published in these editions. Apart from the print runs of school text books, encyclopaedias and books sold by installments, all of which are considerable, four categories of print run tend to be established. First, certain books –not many– which have the support of a subscription to a complete collection, generally a long one: between 12,000 and 14,000 copies. Secondly, children's books, young people's books and paperbacks: between 5,000 and 6,000 copies. Immediately after this come the majority of titles published: from 2,000 to 3,000 copies. Finally, books of poetry and learned books: between 1,000 and 2,000 copies. Recent estimates establish the average print run at 6,600 copies per title. This average, multiplied by 4,200 titles, gives a total for 1989 of 27,720,000 copies.

This is hardly the place for an analysis of the subject matter of Catalan publishing. However, to appease the reader's curiosity a little, we can say that the highest figures correspond to text books, followed in descending order by literature, children's and young people's books, social sciences, technical and scientific books, history and biography. Since the countries of Catalan language and culture are fully immersed in the European publishing reality, it is legitimate, and almost necessary, to wonder about the relative value of Catalan editorial production.

Compared with those European languages corresponding to populations of a similar size, and according to figures up to 1986 provided by UNESCO's Statistical Yearbook, Catalonia exceeds Ireland in publishing, is comparable to Norway and is not far behind Greece and Romania (although Greek and Romanian are spoken by a larger number of people). Other minority languages publish more, as is the case with Greek and Dutch.

To sum up, in an extremely fast ten-year process of normalization, Catalan publishing has gained an equal footing with those European languages of similar human potential. At the moment, no drop is predicted. Prospects for the future are good, especially if we consider its increasing acceptance in European literary circles. ●